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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of 47 members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 5 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations presents its compliments to the President of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly and with reference to the note dated 22 March 2006, has the honour to transmit a document containing Germany's voluntary pledges and commitments in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251 to be published on the United Nations website.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 5 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Germany and the Human Rights Council
Voluntary pledges and commitments in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251

Germany has decided to stand for election to the United Nations Human Rights Council at the elections to be held during the 60th session of the United Nations General Assembly on 9 May 2006.

1. Germany's human rights policy

Germany, where the duty to respect and protect human rights is enshrined in the constitution, is strongly committed to multilateral action to advance the cause of human rights. Besides its active membership of the regional frameworks of the Council of Europe and the OSCE, Germany has consistently supported the primary role of the United Nations in the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide.

The priority given by Germany to United Nations action in the field of human rights has long translated into active support for all components of the United Nations' human rights machinery. Germany is party to almost all major United Nations human rights instruments and has consistently observed its reporting obligations; it has strongly supported the United Nations' ad hoc tribunals and in particular the establishment of the International Criminal Court; Germany has been one of the main supporters of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights since its inception after the Vienna World Conference, and has actively participated in the work of the United Nations Human Rights bodies, particularly as a member of the Commission on Human Rights.

2. Germany's strong support for the Human Rights Council

In line with its long-standing commitment to the United Nations' action to promote and protect human rights, Germany has from the outset given its full support to Secretary-General Annan's proposal to further strengthen the United Nations' human rights machinery, in particular by replacing the Commission on Human Rights with an Human Rights Council. After the successful conclusion of the negotiations on the new Council, Germany, given its experience as a member of the Commission, is convinced that it can make a useful contribution to the work of the new Council. Germany's membership of the Council will be of particular importance during the first half of 2007 when Germany will assume the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

3. Germany's commitments to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights

Concerning future action to strengthen the universal promotion and protection of human rights, Germany will continue to strive for the highest standards and, to this effect, commits itself to the following main objectives:

a) In the **United Nations**, Germany will

- strive to further increase its support for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights;

- continue to work for the universality and indivisibility of all human rights, civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural, including the right to development. In doing so, Germany will continue to pursue, together with Finland, the joint initiative on the "Right to Adequate Housing" and will furthermore continue to strive for increased implementation of the "Guidelines on the Right to Food" adopted, with German sponsoring, by FAO in 2004. Germany will complement its traditional commitment to economic, social and cultural rights, by introducing in 2006, together with Spain, a new initiative aimed at strengthening the "Right to Water";

- continue to promote dialogue and cooperation as the primary means for protecting and strengthening human rights worldwide. To this effect, Germany intends to further develop and strengthen, together with India, the joint initiative on "Advisory Services and Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights";

- strive for the preservation and strengthening of the systems of special procedures, which Germany considers to be one of the major achievements of the Commission on Human Rights. To this effect, Germany will, in the new Human Rights Council, confirm its long-standing policy of unrestricted cooperation with United Nations special procedures, including the readiness to receive their visits whenever and wherever;

- continue to give special emphasis to the strengthening of gender equality, the rights of women and the rights of the child;

- strive for the early approval of the draft "International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance";

- continue to contribute actively to the early successful conclusion of the negotiations on an "International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities".

b) **Domestically**, Germany will

- strive to ratify still in 2006 the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture as well as the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography;

- in 2006 complete and submit to the respective Treaty Bodies the next periodic state reports regarding the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women as well as the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

- adopt in 2006 a "National Plan of Action" to combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, in implementation of the Declaration and the Plan of Action of the 2001 Durban World Conference;

- during the Soccer World Cup in Germany in summer 2006, implement, in cooperation with FIFA, an anti-racism campaign, as suggested by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.